

**West Keizer Neighborhood Association
Special General Meeting, Keizer Rapids Park Master Planning Process
7 p.m., June 12, 2014, at Keizer Civic Center
Minutes submitted by Carolyn Homan, secretary**

Introduction of members -- WKNA President Rhonda Rich called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., with about 22 people attending. Rhonda welcomed everyone and urged attendees to sign in. Introductions were made around the room, including guests Robert Johnson, Parks and Facilities supervisor with the City of Keizer; John Morgan, consultant to the city who will facilitate an upcoming design charette regarding amenities to be placed in areas of Keizer Rapids Park that were recently brought within the Urban Growth Boundary; and members of Keizer's Parks Advisory Board: Brandon Smith, David Loudon, Rowland Herrera, Richard Walsh and Marlene Quinn, council liaison to the parks board and chair of the Big Toy task force.

Approval of Minutes for May 8, 2014 – Rhonda asked for approval of minutes, which were provided via email. Carol Doerfler moved approval and Clint Holland seconded. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

WKNA Budget for 2013-14 – Rhonda reported that WKNA spent \$500.87 for the year, just 87 cents over the approved amount. She said she had asked the city to just disregard reimbursing the extra cents. WKNA's budget request of \$900 for 2014-15 has been approved. Rhonda told the group that the WKNA Board is interested in any suggestions about how to reach all 3,200 or so members of WKNA. The Board has considered doing a mailing, but the expense is far beyond even the newly budgeted amount.

West Keizer Parks report –

Update on KRP community build playstructure: Ron Freeman, WKNA Board's representative to the Big Toy Task Force, reported on the group's most recent meeting, Tuesday, June 3. He said they received updates on fundraising, including a \$15,000 grant received from Oregon Community Foundation and \$10,000 from Keizer Parks Foundation's Pinot for the Parks event. There was general discussion at the task force meeting about the delay of the community build, now planned for June 2015, the day after school lets out for the year. There will be more discussion on location of the Big Toy after official approval of the UGB expansion.

Rhonda asked about the status of the Big Toy website and Ron reported that it's in the final stages. It will have updates on the build, as well as volunteer signup capability and ways to donate to the project. The website is www.keizerbigtoy.org. Marlene Quinn also directed those interested to the Big Toy Facebook page, which is up and running.

Sunset Park improvements: Clint Holland reported that an irrigation system has been installed and seeding is in progress. He said materials were provided by the City and volunteers provided the labor. Rhonda and Carol thanked Clint again for organizing this project. A couple of picnic tables also are to be put in place.

Tow Truck Parking in the City of Keizer – Rhonda reported that she testified at the recent public forum on this topic that WKNA was not in favor of allowing tow truck parking on city streets. The City Council is to decide at its June 16 meeting and, while there will be no more opportunity for public testimony, citizens can email council members on the issue.

Improvements on Delight Street/sidewalks – This issue is on the June 26 agenda of the Traffic/Bikeways/Pedestrian Committee meeting. WKNA is in favor of sidewalks as a way to improve safety for schoolchildren on the way to Cummings Elementary and to McNary High School.

Discussion: Master Planning for Keizer Rapids Park – Rhonda noted that WKNA does not normally meet during the summer and that the next regular meeting would be Sept. 11. But the Parks Board was asked by City Council to get input on what citizens want to see in KRP, specifically the areas that were newly brought within the Urban Growth Boundary, and WKNA wanted to be part of that process. Maps of the park, which outlined the UGB areas and noted major amenities such as the dog park, amphitheater and boat ramp, were distributed.

Rhonda explained that the newly added areas – the filbert orchard and the open fields by the river east of the boat ramp – are to be zoned “Parks” and “Public.” She emphasized that WKNA supports maintaining the areas as parkland, with no housing development allowed. WKNA also asked at a Planning Commission meeting where KRP zoning issues were considered that the 75 to 100 foot buffer area between KRP and the neighborhood to the east be continued along the orchard area border.

KRP’s Master Plan has been in place since 2006, Rhonda said. She shared copies of an informational document developed ahead of that master planning process for what was then a 117-acre park. She reiterated that tonight’s meeting would look only at the 58 acres just brought into the UGB.

The group also reviewed the timeline that the City has developed regarding completion of the Parks Master Plan Amendment to incorporate the 58 acres. The Gubser neighborhood input forum was held May 15 and the Keizer Parks Advisory Board held a public forum June 10. Future events include a Parks board public hearing Tuesday, July 8, at McNary High School Cafeteria to receive public input from all youth and activity groups regarding amenities desired in the park.

On Tuesday, Aug. 12, the Parks board will evaluate the list of amenities created and develop a priority list. Rhonda again noted that placement of amenities wasn’t on tonight’s agenda. WKNA “will do that at our Sept. 11 meeting” in order to consider the entire list that will have been developed by then by the Parks board in advance of the Design Charette set for Saturday, Sept. 20, at Keizer Civic Center. The charette will include the Parks Board, City Council and invited parties to create concept designs that incorporate the prioritized amenities into the park boundary.

The Parks board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, Oct. 14, to review the concept designs from the charette and make a recommendation to City Council on the preferred design. Council then will hold a public hearing on the Parks Master Plan Amendment on Monday, Nov. 3, “so they will have the Big Toy site decided by the end of the year and can begin site preparation the first of next year,” Rhonda said.

She explained the “dotmocracy” process (also used by Gubser neighborhood) that will be used tonight to develop a list of preferred amenities. Parks Board member Richard Walsh clarified that “really, nothing is off the table” in terms of suggestions. “Ideas aren’t limited by time or money” and the plan isn’t a “this year” plan. People were encouraged to think long range. Rhonda said the WKNA Board suggested that ideas focus on things not already in the park.

Rhonda said each participant would get 12 sticky dots with which to vote on their top 12 amenities. People could then “place” the top 12 amenities on a handout she developed that listed the four major areas of the park: Area 1 (the open field area south of the dike); Area 2 (the filbert orchard); Area 3 (the “fairway” area that includes the dog park and amphitheater); and Area 4 (the natural, forested area to the west of the proposed UGB).

Participants then listed and discussed a variety of amenities – more than 20 – which included picnic areas (covered and not covered); open activity fields; parking; more rest rooms (real ones, not porta potties); a play structure; fitness stations; an observatory; a science/education center; BMX/motocross area; open play fields; a tree house; community gardens; horse shoe court; osprey nest poles; bird houses; sports courts; tennis courts; more trails – and lighted trails; more connection to the river; buffer zone extension.

Open play fields were distinguished from sports or otherwise “designated” fields because participants saw a need for areas where families could throw a Frisbee, play bocce ball, etc. It was suggested that a science/education center could be developed in cooperation with Straub Environmental Center.

In answer to a question about how the Parks board planned to get input from a primary park demographic – the youth -- now that school was out, Richard Walsh noted that input from sport leagues and groups was on the calendar. Participants questioned whether that was enough, however, given that many youth don’t participate in organized sports. They also questioned developing a priority list of amenities in August before there was a chance to poll school children at the start of the new school year. Social media was suggested as a way to connect with youth, but there were no specifics as to how this might be accomplished.

Participants then placed their dots, only one per amenity, to develop the Top 12 list of amenities. Voting revealed the following list, with number of votes:

Connection to the River, 18
Picnic Areas, 17
Multi-use playfields - Open lawn-no organized sports, 15
Playstructure, 14
Poles for Osprey nests, 14
Restrooms- water, flush toilets, 12
Fitness Stations , 12
Science Center (Straub), 12
Parking, 11
Observatory, 9
Maintain & Extend Neighborhood Buffer, 9
More Birdhouses, 8
Community Gardens, 8
Sports Courts , 6
BMX Trails, 6
Designated Sports Fields, 5
Leave Orchard Area Natural, 4
Treehouse, 4
More Trails – lighted, 4
Tennis Courts, 3
Horseshoe Pit , 1

Since Connection to the River was the top vote-getter, Rhonda asked the group to expand on what this would mean to them. Jerry Nutbrock noted that he has sternwheeler paddlewheels on his property that he would like to provide as educational elements to be included in a display at the park. He will promote this as part of the Connection to the River process. Others agreed that a sternwheeler history education area would be an appropriate part of any Connection to the River amenity, noting that the Willamette River at one time was the I-5 of the local economy. Jerry directed people to a sternwheel on display in Hood River as an example of what might be done. As with any project, he said, “this one will only succeed if people come together and push it forward.”

Councilor Cathy Clark said she could see the potential for this amenity, noting that it is a “great conversation to have.”

Rhonda said she thinks of Salem’s Riverfront Park in terms of connection to the river, with its open areas that accommodate a variety of family activities, the large covered picnic area, the “ecoball” feature and large playstructure, not to mention the Carousel. Time was then given to people to fill out their amenities placement lists and share their “park vision” statements to offer general concepts of what KRP could be. Rhonda noted that all the information developed at tonight’s meeting will be compiled and presented at the July Parks board meeting.

The WKNA Board will meet July 10 at 6 p.m. to develop fall meeting topics. General meetings resume Sept. 11.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.